

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ERDA-05 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00 CIEP-01

COME-00 DODE-00 EB-07 FEAE-00 FPC-01 H-02 INR-07

INT-05 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-03 SAM-01 OES-03

SP-02 SS-15 STR-04 TRSE-00 FRB-03 PA-01 PRS-01 USIA-06

LAB-04 SIL-01 /096 W

----- 001390

P R 021215Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4171

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 5644

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ENRG, ELTN, ELAB, JO, SA, LE, US

SUBJECT: TAPLINE: GOL GIVEN UNTIL MAY 10?

REF: BEIRUT 5518

SUMMARY: UNLESS SOMETHING UNFORESEEN OCCURS, TAPLINE MAY
ISSUE TERMINATION NOTICES TO 52 BEIRUT EMPLOYEES ON OR BEFORE
MAY 10. THIS MAY COST TAPLINE UNION SUPPORT AND CAUSE DEMON-
STRATIONS OF SOME SORT. GOL DELEGATION TO TIYADH MAY INCLUDE
PRIME MINISTER, THREE OTHER MINISTERS AND THREE EXPERTS. VISIT
MAY BE MONDAY, MAY 5, BUT THIS NOT CERTAIN. END SUMMARY

1. DODGE, TAPLINE BEIRUT, TODAY PROVIDED FOLLOWING TO EMBOFF.
 2. VOHLGETHAN, TAPLINE BEIRUT CHIEF, AND DODGE CONFERRED
SEPARATELY WEDNESDAY, APRIL 30, WITH LABOR AND OIL MINISTERS AND
GEORGE SACRE, MOBIL EMPLOYEE WHO HEADS LEBANON PETROLEUM WORKERS
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FEDERATION AND THIS YEAR ALSO IS PRESIDENT OF DENVER-BASED INTER-

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF PETROLEUM WORKERS. TAPLINE TOLD MINISTERS THAT TAPLINE SHAREHOLDERS HAVE DECIDED TO BEGIN "PHASING OUT" (MOTHBALLING BUT NOT ABANDONING) TAPLINE IN LEBANON (JORDAN NOT AFFECTED AT THIS TIME) AND WOULD IN "IMMEDIATE FUTURE" ISSUE TERMINATION NOTICES TO 52 EMPLOYEES. LIST GIVEN LABMIN. HE ASKED FOR 10-DAY DELAY AND TAPLINE BEIRUT AGREED PASS REQUEST TO SHAREHOLDERS. FYI IN DOING SO, TAPLINE BEIRUT RECOMMENDED DELAYING 10 DAYS AND EXPECTS NEW YORK/DHAHRAN WILL AGREE. END FYI. OILMIN GIVEN GIST OF ABOVE. SACRE, TAPLINE UNION HEADS BEIRUT AND SIDON AND SECTION CHIEFS GIVEN GENERAL BRIEFING ON POSSIBLE TERMINATIONS AND TAPLINE'S REASONS. SACRE RESPONDED THAT WHILE UNION WOULD ACCEPT TOTAL CLOSURE (SIC) IT DOES NOT RPT NOT AGREE THAT OPERATING COSTS SHOULD BE REDUCED BY STAFF REDUCTIONS. TAPLINE RESPONDED, IN EFFECT, THAT WHATEVER HAPPENS OPERATING COSTS MUST BE REDUCED.

3. THURSDAY, MAY 1, DODGE MET WITH RAYMOND HITTI, FINANCIAL EXPERT FOR OIL MINISTRY, WHO, DODGE SAYS, HAS GOOD TECHNICAL GRASP OF PROBLEM AND UNDERSTANDS TAPLINE'S POSITION.

4. HITTI AND OTHER SOURCES SAID PROMISED GOL VISIT TO RIYADH DELAYED FROM LAST WEEK BY NECESSITY ENSURE CONTACT WITH SAG OILMIN YAMANI, WHO NOW BUSY WITH SYRIA-IRAQ EUPHRATES DISPUTE. SOURCES THINK GOL DELEGATION MIGHT GO TO RIYADH MONDAY, MAY 5, BUT THIS STILL NOT DEFINITE. DELEGATION LIKELY CONSIST OF GOL FOREIGN, OIL AND LABOR MINISTERS PLUS HITTI, ISSAM ACHOUR, BEIRUT ECONOMIST-BANKER WHO ALSO HEADS GOL COMMITTEE OVERSEEING OPERATION OF FORMER IPC RPT IPC INSTALLATIONS HERE AND KHALIL SALEM, FINANCE MINISTRY DIRECTOR GENERAL, WHO WIELDS CONSIDERABLE INFLUENCE ON GOL POLICIES. DODGE CONSIDERS LATTER THREE HIGHLY COMPETENT AND FAMILIAR WITH SITUATION. IT STILL UNCERTAIN WHETHER PRIME MINISTER WILL HEAD DELEGATION.

COMMENT: DODGE RELUCTANT CONFIRM, BUT IT VERY LIKELY THAT TAPLINE WILL REDUCE STAFF SOON REGARDLESS OF PROGRESS OR LACK OF IT IN OVERALL PROBLEM. TAPLINE HAD EARLIER MADE CLEAR THAT STAFF WOULD BE REDUCED EVEN IF NORMAL OPERATIONS RESUME. DODGE SAID IT NOT YET DECIDED IF TERMINATIONS WOULD BE EFFECTIVE WHEN NOTICES DELIVERED OR AT LATER DATE. HE AGREED THAT AFFECTED EMPLOYEES (AND/OR ALLIES OF THEIRS) MIGHT REACT BY DEMONSTRATING

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AGAINST TAPLINE. WE DO NOT EXCLUDE POSSIBILITY OF INDUSTRY-WIDE STRIKE TO INTERRUPT COUNTRY'S FUEL SUPPLIES, AIMED AT PRESSURING BOTH TAPLINE AND GOL. MOREOVER, WE ARE SCEPTICAL THAT UNIONS WOULD IN FACT "ACCEPT" TOTAL CLOSURE, AT LEAST WITHOUT ENSURING PROTEST OF ONE KIND OR ANOTHER.
GODLEY

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